

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 090474

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ORIGIN OES-06

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ARA-10 EA-09 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-13 EB-07

PCH-04 SIG-02 INR-07 MED-03 NSAE-00 PA-02 DHA-02

SCA-01 USIA-15 PRS-01 CIAE-00 HEW-06 AID-05 DODE-00

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EB/JKATZ(DRAFT)

EUR/RPE: JWOLFE (DRAFT)

SCA:LLAWRENCE (DRAFT)

IO/HDC:RANDREW(DRAFT)

AID:TA/H:JSTOCKARD(DRAFT)

USIA/IOP:JHAWKINS(DRAFT)

DG/MED:MWOLFE(DRAFT)

NEA:EGABINGTON(DRAFT)

ARA:GECHAFIN(DRAFT)

EA:JRCUNNINGHAM(DRAFT)

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO ALL DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR POSTS

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT BY POUCH

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INFORM CONSULS

.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: TPHY, OSCI, TBIO,

SUBJECT: SWINE INFLUENZA: CIRCULAR TELEGRAM TO ALL
DIPLOMATIC POSTS

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PAGE 02 STATE 090474

SWINE INFLUENZA

1. IN FEBRUARY 1976, A NEW STRAIN OF SWINE INFLUENZA-LIKE VIRUS, DESIGNATED AS INFLUENZA A/NEW JERSEY/76 (HSW1N1), WAS ISOLATED IN THE UNITED STATES FROM AN OUTBREAK OF DISEASE AMONG MILITARY RECRUITS AT FORT DIX, NEW JERSEY. ONE DEATH ENSUED. SEVERAL HUNDRED OTHER RECRUITS SHOWED SEROLOGIC EVIDENCE OF INFECTION BY THIS VIRUS. THESE RECRUITS WERE NOT MORE ILL THAN PERSONS WHO SUFFERED FROM INFLUENZA A/VICTORIA VIRUS WHICH WAS ALSO PREVALENT AT THAT TIME AT FORT DIX AND ELSEWHERE AROUND THE COUNTRY.

2. THE NEW A/NEW JERSEY/76 INFLUENZA VIRUS HAS BEEN FOUND TO BE ANTIGENICALLY RELATED TO THE INFLUENZA VIRUS WHICH HAS BEEN IMPLICATED AS THE CAUSE OF THE 1918-1919 PANDEMIC WHICH KILLED 548,000 AMERICANS. SEROLOGIC DATA INDICATE THAT PRIOR TO 1930, SWINE INFLUENZA-LIKE VIRUS WAS A MAJOR CAUSE OF HUMAN INFLUENZA IN THE UNITED STATES. SINCE 1930, THE VIRUS HAS BEEN LIMITED TO TRANSMISSION AMONG SWINE, WITH ONLY OCCASIONAL TRANSMISSION FROM SWINE TO MAN. NO PERSON-TO-PERSON TRANSMISSION HAD BEEN DOCUMENTED PRIOR TO THE RECENT OUTBREAK WHICH WAS CONFINED TO FORT DIX, NEW JERSEY.

3. ONLY THE FORT DIX OUTBREAK HAS BEEN DOCUMENTED AS BEING DUE TO THE SWINE INFLUENZA-LIKE VIRUS EVEN THOUGH EXTENSIVE NATIONWIDE VIRAL ISOLATION AND SEROTYPIC STUDIES HAVE BEEN INITIATED. WHILE THE NEW STRAIN HAS SOME OF THE ANTIGENIC CHARACTERISTICS ASSOCIATED WITH PANDEMIC STRAINS, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PREDICT AT THIS TIME WHETHER IT WILL RECUR AND SPREAD. THERE IS NO CERTAINTY THAT THERE WILL BE OUTBREAKS LATER THIS YEAR, OR EPIDEMICS NEXT YEAR IN THIS COUNTRY OR ELSEWHERE. NEVERTHELESS THE EVIDENCE IS SUCH AS TO HAVE PERSUADED U.S. MEDICAL OFFICIALS THAT IT WOULD BE PRUDENT TO BEGIN COUNTERMEASURES AT ONCE.

4. THE WHO, WHICH WAS PROMPTLY INFORMED OF THE OUTBREAK AT FORT DIX, HAS ALERTED ALL ITS INFLUENZA CENTERS AROUND THE WORLD. EXTENSIVE SURVEILLANCE IS BEING MAINTAINED INTERNATIONALLY. WHO HAS PROVIDED LABORATORY REAGENTS FOR THE PROMPT IDENTIFICATION OF UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 STATE 090474

THIS NEW STRAIN. WHO IS KEEPING MEMBER STATES FULLY INFORMED. IN ADDITION TO SURVEILLANCE, WHO'S COLLABORATIVE CENTERS HAVE ISSUED A STRAIN OF THE NEW VIRUS TO RESEARCH LABORATORIES IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES SO THAT THEY CAN BEGIN TO STUDY ITS GROWTH CHARACTERISTICS WITH A VIEW TOWARD POSSIBLE VACCINE PRODUCTION.

5. ON MARCH 31, 1976, PRESIDENT FORD FORMALLY DIRECTED

THE UNITED STATES PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE, TO PROCEED WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF PLANS TO MAKE A VACCINE AGAINST THIS VIRUS AVAILABLE TO ALL AMERICANS. THERE ARE PLANS FOR THE DEPARTMENTS OF STATE AND DEFENSE TO IMMUNIZE U.S. MILITARY AND OFFICIAL CIVILIAN PERSONNEL AND THEIR DEPENDENTS. (SEPTTEL REGARDING STATE PERSONNEL FOLLOWS.) ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE IMMEDIATELY SHARED WITH MEMBERS OF THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO) AND WITH THE WORLD COMMUNITY.

6. SUPPLIES OF THE VACCINE WILL BE LIMITED. IT IS NOT YET KNOWN WHAT AMOUNT OF VACCINE U.S. MANUFACTURERS ARE CAPABLE OF PRODUCING. HOWEVER, IT IS NOT ANTICIPATED THAT THE NUMBER OF DOSES THEY CAN PRODUCE THIS YEAR WILL EXCEED OUR TOTAL POPULATION OF 213,000,000. MANY OTHER COUNTRIES, INCLUDING THE UNITED KINGDOM, U.S.S.R., ETC. ARE CAPABLE OF MANUFACTURING THE VACCINE, BUT THEIR PLANS ARE NOT YET KNOWN.

7. THERE HAS BEEN NO DECISION REGARDING THE DISTRIBUTION OF ANY SURPLUS U.S. VACCINE TO OTHER COUNTRIES. IT IS HOPED THAT A MASSIVE CAMPAIGN IN THE U.S. WILL HELP PREVENT THE SPREAD OF THE VIRUS TO OTHER COUNTRIES. AT THIS TIME, IT IS LIKELY THAT AS THE VACCINE BECOMES AVAILABLE, INITIAL VACCINATIONS OF AMERICANS WILL BEGIN DURING LATE SUMMER AND WILL BE CONTINUED THROUGH THE FALL AND EARLY WINTER.

8. THE U.S. WILL CONTINUE TO OFFER ALL POSSIBLE TECHNICAL ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE TO OTHER COUNTRIES, BOTH DIRECTLY AND THROUGH THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION. THIS ASSIS-
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PAGE 04 STATE 090474

TANCE WILL INCLUDE PROVIDING UP-TO-DATE EPIDEMIOLOGIC INFORMATION AND PROVIDING TECHNICAL INFORMATION ON VACCINE PRODUCTION TO REPRESENTATIVES OF OTHER COUNTRIES.

9. ACTION REQUESTED: AT YOUR DISCRETION IF APPROACHED BY HOST GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS YOU MAY USE THE ABOVE FOR DISCUSSION. THERE ARE STILL MANY UNANSWERED QUESTIONS CURRENTLY UNDER CONSIDERATION BY THE USG. FURTHER GUIDANCE WILL BE GIVEN AS THE SUPPLY SITUATION BECOMES MORE CLEAR. KISSINGER

NOTE BY OC/T: POUCHED ABOVE ADDRESSEES.

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